encouraging the consumers to post their representatives at the loading point for quality loading are taken by the coal companies.

[English]

Export and Import of Restricted Items

1955. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of items which were kept outside Open General Licence in EXIM-Policy of 1994-95 and 1995-96: and

(b) the details of items which were exported and imported mostly from the restricted items during the above period ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH: (a) The current Export & Import Policy which came into being on 1st April, 1992 and is valid upto 31st, March, 1997 permits free import and export of capital goods, raw materials, intermediates, components, consumables, spares, parts, accessories, instruments and other goods except such goods which are covered by the Negative Lists of Imports or Exports or which are regulated by any other law for the time being in force. The importability and exportability of goods is specified itemwise in the ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items.

(b) Items covered by Negative List of Imports or Exports are allowed to be imported or exported against specific licences or through general instructions notified in this regard. These items for export include fertilizers, dual purpose chemicals, pulses, peacock tail feathers, castor seeds etc. and for import these include Penicillin G, Rifampicin, Cars in CKD/SKD, Stallion & Broodmares, Trainer aircraft etc. The details of such licences are published in the fortnightly Exim Update, copies of which are also available in the Parliament library.

Ban of Rs. 500 Denomination in Nepal

1956. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any representation against the ban of five hundred rupee currency notes in Nepal:

(b) if so, the reasons therefor: and

(c) the steps taken by the Indian Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). As per existing provisions of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), movement of Indian currency/ bank notes upto Rs. 100 denomination only is allowed between India and Nepal. It was reported by our Embassy at Nepal in October, 1993, that because of large scale movement of people between the borders, it had become almost impossible to adhere to the above instructions and as a result 500-rupee notes were freely available and were being accepted in various business transactions and even the local banks in Nepal while converting Nepalese currency into Indian currency often gave 500-rupee notes. Normally, whenever the Nepalese banks generate surplus Indian currency notes (upto Rs. 100 denomination notes) such notes are transferred to the Patna branch of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) through Nepal Rashtriya Bank (NRB). However, because of FERA restrictions, the RBI was not accepting 500-rupee notes from the Nepalese Banks. Thus, it was reported that the NRB was having a total deposit of 500-rupee notes worth Rs. 57 crores.

The matter was discussed at various points of time both through diplomatic channels and also by the Governor,RBI with Governor,NRB. Although, earlier a view had been taken that acceptance of 500-rupee notes held by NRB should not be permitted because this was violating the FERA regulations of Government of India, the matter had been reviewed and it was decided that in case the Nepalese Government issued a notification to all its Banks not to buy or sell Rs.500 notes, the matter could be reconsidered. The NRB had issued such a notification on 15th August, 1994. Hence, it was decided that as a one-time measure, the RBI would accept all the 500-rupee notes held in the NRB as on 15.8.1994.

Hence RBI had advised their Patna office to accept Rs. 500 denomination notes held by NRB as on 15-8-1994 to the extent of Rs. 57,56,10,500.

Since a number of cases of forgery of 500 rupee notes have been reported in the North East area, it is not considered appropriate to lift the present ban on movement of Rs.500 notes between India and Nepal.

UTI's Tax Saving Schemes

1957. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount collected by the Unit Trust of India and other financial institutions under various Tax Saving Schemes (like the Master Equity Plan) during the each of last four years:

(b) the present "Net Asset Value" and "Market Value" of these schemes;

(c) the total amount of loss involved to the investors due to the discounted value of these schemes:

(d) the steps taken by the Government to safeguard the interests of the investors:

(e) whether the investors are entitled to off-set these losses against their income; and

(f) if not, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (f). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.